

GOVERNMENT ADMINISTRATION AND ELECTIONS COMMITTEE
Public Hearing February 6, 2015

Testimony on Raised Bill No. 848

An Act Concerning Polling places for Primaries

Senator Cassano, Representative Jutila and Members of the GAE Committee

My name is Sue W. Larsen. I am Chairman of the ROVAC Legislative Committee and here to speak in support of SB 848 with modifications. ROVAC supports the consolidation of polling places for low turnout primaries. This bill has come before this committee many times over the past 5 years. A few years ago, a similar bill passed both chambers but was vetoed by the Governor. Each time we have expressed our support for fiscal responsibility while maintaining the integrity of the election process.

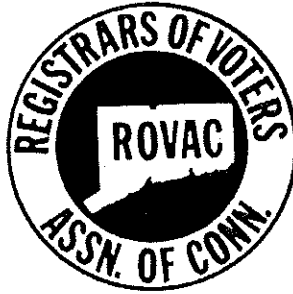
Registrars of Voters maintain data related to voter turnout during past primaries and based on that data can make a determination of the number of polling places necessary to conduct a fair and impartial primary. Municipalities could have considerable cost savings if allowed to do this. Many municipalities already consolidate polling places for local referendum. In these localities, the voters are aware of their polling locations for different types of voting and it doesn't appear to impact the vote.

The issue ROVAC has with this bill is confidentiality of the letters sent by the candidates to the Secretary of the State. Elections and primaries should be an open process. If candidates have issues with consolidation, the issue should be open for discussion.

In summary, ROVAC is looking forward to discussing solutions with GAE and the Governor's office, to the concerns of voter awareness, candidate fairness, and fiscal responsibility.

Thank you for allowing this testimony.

Sue W. Larsen, Registrar of Voters, South Windsor
ROVAC Legislative Chair



GOVERNMENT ADMINISTRATION AND ELECTIONS COMMITTEE
Public Hearing February 13, 2015

Testimony on Raised Bill HB 6744

An Act Concerning Mandatory Registrars of Voters Sessions

Senator Cassano, Representative Jutila and Members of the GAE Committee

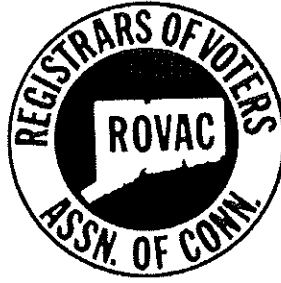
My name is Sue W. Larsen. I am Chairman of the ROVAC Legislative Committee and here to speak in support of HB 6744. ROVAC constantly talks about technology upgrades and how it has and will continue to make the election process easier for the voter. However, there are times when the statutes do not keep up with the technology we support. Mandatory Registrars of Voters sessions on the Saturday of the third week before the election is one of those carryovers. With online registration becoming an integral part of the registration process, we no longer need the mandatory session to insure the voter has every opportunity to register. For those residents that even forget to register prior to the election have the opportunity to register and vote on Election Day.

Many offices across the state had no one come in the register to vote in person on that day. Many citizens not registered still don't have the election on their list of to do's. The week before, the realization that they need to registered hits home. That is why we register quite a few people the last day allowed to register prior to Election Day.

One option that would allow more time for voters to register, is to allow the cutoff date for online registration to be extended to the 7th day before the election. Currently, it is considered a mail in registration which has a cutoff of two weeks prior to the election. This will still allow the mail verification of residency.

Thank you for allowing this testimony.

Sue W. Larsen, Registrar of Voters South Windsor
ROVAC Legislative Chair



GOVERNMENT ADMINISTRATION AND ELECTIONS COMMITTEE
Public Hearing February 13, 2015

Testimony on Raised Bill SB 601

An Act Eliminating Overvoting for a Candidate

Senator Cassano, Representative Jutila and Members of the GAE Committee

My name is Sue W. Larsen. I am Chairman of the ROVAC Legislative Committee and here to speak in support of SB 601. ROVAC is in support of SB601 because first and foremost Registrars of Voters believe in the integrity of voter intent. Under the current system, the Registrars of voters must allocate unknown votes based on a formula. This is not voter intent.

The integrity of the voter system is at risk when a voter believes they have voted for their candidate twice. In reality, the voter may have filled in the oval for the same candidate twice but the vote is counted only once as an unknown (no party designation). The allocation of the votes does not reflect the true strength of a political party because voter intent is lost.

ROVAC proposes that when an elector votes twice for the same candidate, it be handled as an overvote. This process is similar to voting for more than the allotted votes in a municipal race such as Board of Education. The ballot is rejected and the voter is given a new ballot to fill out.

ROVAC would propose the following so that a voter is NEVER disenfranchised. In the case where the voter decides not to fill out a new ballot, the ballot is placed in an auxiliary bin to be hand counted. In that case only, the vote would be counted as unknown in the polling place. The ballot would not be spoiled unless the voter received a new ballot to fill out. Absentee ballots would be treated similarly. The overvote would result in an automatic hand count because the voter did not have the opportunity to correct the ballot.

SB 601 corrects a flaw in CT's voting system. We urge you to consider this bill.

Thank you for allowing this testimony.

Sue W. Larsen, Registrar of Voters South Windsor
ROVAC Legislative Chair